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WIGAN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report

of the

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1949

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Wigan Rural District Council

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J. H. Gill, Esq.
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Clerk :
Robert Gaskell, A.L.A.A.

Staff Public Health Department :
Medical Officer of Health :
G. H. Potter, M.B., ChB., D.P.H., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Engineer, Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector :
J. Holding.

Water Inspector :
W. R. Wright.

Bank Chambers,

Wallgate,

Wigan, 1950.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Wigan Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in submitting to you the Annual Report on the health of the district, compiled, as in previous years, in the abbreviated form indicated by the Ministry of Health.

I take this opportunity of tendering my best thanks to the Officials of the Council, the Staff of the Health Department, and especially to the Sanitary Inspector, for valuable help and co-operation at all times.

I desire also to express to the members of the Council my appreciation of the courtesy and consideration they have always displayed towards me.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

G. H. POTTER.

Wigan Rural District Council

1.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area: 11,696 acres.

Population (Census 1931)	6,126
Estimated mid-1949 (Registrar-General)	8,000
Total Number of Houses (Census 1931)	2,290
Number of Inhabited Houses at end of 1949—according to Rate Book	2,372
Rateable Value	£43,394
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£168 2s. 2d.

The chief industries of the Wigan Rural District are agriculture, sandstone quarrying, glue and linoleum manufacture and malt extract, bleaching and dyeing. Certain areas are purely residential.

VITAL STATISTICS.

		Male	F.	Total.
Live Births	(Legitimate)	69	57	126
	(Illegitimate)	—	4	4
Total		69	61	130
Still Births	(Legitimate)	2	—	2
	(Illegitimate)	—	—	—
Total		2	—	2
Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age:				
	(Legitimate)	2	—	2
	(Illegitimate)	—	1	1
Total		2	1	3
Deaths		53	46	99

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population mid-1949	16.3
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	12.6
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 Total (live and Still) Births	15.0
No. of Women dying in, or in consequence of, Pregnancy and Childbirth :	
From Puerperal and Post Abortive Sepsis.....	Nil.
From other maternal causes	Nil.
Maternal Death Rate per 1,000 Total (live and still) Births due to Puerperal and Post Abortive Sepsis	Nil.
Maternal Death Rate per 1,000 Total (live and still) Births due to other causes	Nil.
Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :—	
All Infants per 1,000 live births	23
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	16
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	250
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	10
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	—
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	—
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	—

TABLE I.

Per 1,000 of Estimated Population.

	Live Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate	Death Rate from Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	Cancer Death Rate
Mean of 5 years—				
1944—1948.....	18.4	11.6	0.21	1.51
1948.....	19.0	10.3	0.12	1.76
1949.....	16.3	12.6	0.25	1.25
Increase or Decrease in 1949 on 5 years' average, 1944—1948	—2.1	+0.8	+0.04	—0.26
On previous year's average....	—2.7	+2.1	+0.13	—0.51

Maternal Mortality Rate.

	Per 1,000 Live Births	Per 1,000 (Total Live and Still Births)	Rate of Deaths under 1 year per 1,000 Live Births
Mean of 5 years—			
1944—1948	2.87	2.81	49
1948	Nil.	Nil.	39
1949	Nil.	Nil.	23
Increase or Decrease in 1949 on 5 years' average, 1944—1948	—2.87	—2.81	—26
On previous year's average	Nil.	Nil.	—16

In the next Table are shown the chief causes of Death and number of Deaths from each cause in 1949, as compared with the previous year.

Table II.

Cause of Death.	No. of Deaths. 1948.	No. of Deaths 1949.
Measles	1	—
Whooping Cough	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—
Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	—	—
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	1	2
Other forms of Tuberculosis	—	—
Syphilitic Diseases	—	—
Influenza	—	1
Cancer, all sites	14	10
Diabetes	—	—
Intra-Cranial Vascular Lesions	9	20
Heart Disease	31	36
Other Diseases of the Circulatory System	2	1
Bronchitis	4	7
Pneumonia	1	—
Other Respiratory Diseases	4	—
Nephritis	1	2

Appendicitis	1	—
Other Digestive Diseases	2	2
Puerperal and Post-abortional Sepsis	—	—
Other maternal causes	—	—
Premature Birth	2	2
Congenital Malformation, Birth Injuries and Infantile Diseases	2	—
Suicide	1	1
Road Traffic Accident	—	—
Other Violent Causes	1	2
All other causes	4	13
	82	99

2.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Laboratory arrangements.—Bacteriological examinations are carried out by the Pathological Department of the Wigan Royal Infirmary and the Public Health Laboratory Monsall, Manchester, and the arrangements are satisfactory, a report being received on every examination.

Reports on 10 throat swabs were received during the year.

3.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supply.—The Parishes obtain water supplies from the following sources :—

Haigh	Blackrod U.D.C.	Upland
Worthington	Standish U.D.C.	Surface
Shevington	Standish U.D.C.	Water
Parbold	Own Supply Deep Well Water	
Wrightington	Own Supply Deep Well Water and Spring Water.	
Dalton	Wrightington	do.

Table showing Consumption by Trade and Domestic Users.

Parish	Estimated "Water" Population	Average Daily Consumption (in gallons)			Average Consumption per day per head of "Water" Population.		
		Domestic	Trade	Supplied to other Districts	Domestic	Trade	Total
Wrightington	2,550	58,887	19,038	Bispham3742	23.09	7.46	30.55
Shevington	3,100	52,452	13,855	....	16.92	4.47	21.39
Parbold	950	19,249	3,734	....	20.26	3.93	24.19
Haigh	770	9,287	52,652	To Aspull 28,172	12.06	68.37	84.36
Dalton	430	5,767	5,753	....	13.41	11.05	24.46
Total	7,800	145,642	95,032	....	18.68	12.18	30.86

Average Daily Total, Domestic and Trade 240,674

SANITARY ACCOMMODATION (at the end of 1949) :—

Number of Privy Middens	290
Number of Closets attached to Privy Middens	430
Number of Pail Closets	550
Number of Freshwater Closets	1,600
Number of Dry Ashpits	30
Number of Movable Ashbins	1,750
Number of Houses on Water Carriage System	1,412

During the year 10 privy closets were converted to fresh w.c.s and 14 to pails ; 10 pail closets were converted to fresh w.c.s and 1 waste w.c. to fresh w.c. 35 movable ashbins were substituted for fixed receptacles.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Two refuse vehicles with 10 workmen are engaged on House Scavenging.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE AREA.

Number of premises visited	285
Number of Nuisances discovered	78
Number of Nuisances abated	65
Number of Informal Notices served	70
Number of Statutory Notices served	10
Number of Legal Proceedings	Nil.

SHOPS AND OFFICES.

Occasional inspections under the provisions of the Shops Act, 1934 and the Public Health Act, 1936, relating to the ventilataion and temperature of shops and offices and to sanitary conveniences were carried out during the year.

CAMPING SITES.

There are two camping sites in the Rural District.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.

There are none in the district.

DISINFESTATION OF VERMINOUS PREMISES.

Four houses were found to be infested, and were dealt with by stoving and spraying with sulphur dioxide and gammexane.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

The manufacture of glue is carried on in the Appley Bridge area under the constant supervision of the Sanitary Inspector.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

There are none in the district.

CANAL BOATS.

No infringements of Acts were discovered.

SCHOOLS.

The water supply to the Schools in the area is constant and sufficient and the facilities for handling meals are considered to be satisfactory.

HOUSING.

General Housing Conditions.—There is still a long list of urgent housing applications, particularly in Shevington, but during the year the Council's Housing programme has been interrupted by the need for carrying out at least part of the Shevington Sewerage Scheme.

It is expected that the Scheme will be commenced in 1950. after which the Shevington Housing Scheme will receive priority

HOUSING STATISTICS.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

Traditional permanent houses :

(i)	By the Local Authority	28
(ii)	By other Local Authorities	—
(iii)	By other bodies and persons	6

1.—INSPECTION of dwelling-houses during the year :

(i)	(a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	30
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	42
(ii)	(a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (i) above which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932)	6
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	6
(iii)		Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	3

(iv) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 20

2.—REMEDY OF DEFECTS during the year without service of Formal Notices :

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers..... 14

3.—ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS during the year :

A—Proceedings under Sections 9, 10, and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936.

(i) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs 1

(ii) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :

(a) by owners 1

(b) by Local Authority in default of owners .... —

B—Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

(i) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 8

(ii) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :

(a) by owners 8

(b) by Local Authority in default of owners .... —

C—Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(i) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ..... —

(ii) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of demolition orders..... —

D—Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(i) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ..... —

(ii) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ..... —

4.—HOUSING ACT, 1936—PART IV.—Overcrowding :—

(a)	(i)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year approximately	30
	(ii)	Number of families dwelling therein approx.	60
	(iii)	Number of persons dwelling therein approx.	220
(b)		Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	Nil.
(c)	(i)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	13
	(ii)	Number of persons concerned in such cases	40

5.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) MILK SUPPLY.—An adequate supply of milk is produced within or brought into the district.

During 1949 30 inspections of the Dairies and Cowsheds in the district have been carried out, the number of dairy farms at 30th September, 1949 being 92 and the number of dairymen or milk purveyors (other than cowkeepers) at 31st December, 1949, 6.

(b) MEAT.—There is no slaughtering in the district other than the slaughter of pigs under Ministry of Food Licence. Occasionally, pigs killed privately are inspected.

There are two registered slaughter-houses with shops attached. Periodic inspections are made and any unsound meat rejected.

No legal proceedings were necessary during the year.

6.—PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

During 1949 cases of infectious disease requiring hospital treatment were removed to Whelley Hospital.

17 cases of Scarlet Fever were notified during the year, as against 30 in 1948, 10 cases being removed to hospital for treatment.

One case of Acute Poliomyelitis was notified during the year. The child was treated in Whelley Hospital and made an uninterrupted recovery.

25 cases of Measles of a mild type were notified.

I am pleased to report that there was no outbreak of Food Poisoning in the district during the year.

Free immunisation against Diphtheria is provided for any pre-school or school-child and is performed by the Medical Officer or Practitioner. During 1949 123 pre-school and 91 school-children completed a full course of primary immunisation with 2 injections of Alum Precipitated Toxoid. In addition 244 children were given a secondary or reinforcing injection.

No preliminary and no post-Schick tests were undertaken.

The general standard of cleanliness and habits in the district remains high, and cases of infestation by lice dealt with at the Clinic were few, and were successfully treated with D.D.T Emulsion.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING 1949 :

TABLE 3.

Disease	Total Ages	Under 1 yr.	1 yr.	2–	3–	4–	5–	10–	15–	20–	35–	45–	Over 65–	Removed to Hospital	Total Deaths Hospital	Total Deaths
Scarlet Fever	17				4		5	6	1	1				10		
Measles	25	1	1		6		14	3						3		
Whooping Cough	22	3	3		9		7									
Pneumonia	4						1				3					
Erysipelas	1										1					
Acute Poliomyelitis	1						1							1		
TOTALS	70	4	4		19		28	9	1	1	4			14		

Distribution over the several Parishes was as follows :—

	Cases.	Total No. of Cases.
Dalton :		
Measles	10	
Whooping Cough	1	
Erysipelas	1	
		12
Haigh :		
Measles	4	
Scarlet Fever	2	
Whooping Cough	2	
Pneumonia	1	
		9
Parbold :		
Whooping Cough	5	
Scarlet Fever	3	
Pneumonia	1	
		9
Shevington :		
Measles	2	
Whooping Cough	4	
Scarlet Fever	3	
Pneumonia	1	
		10
Worthington :		
Measles	1	
Scarlet Fever	1	
		2
Wrightington :		
Measles	8	
Whooping Cough	10	
Scarlet Fever	8	
Pneumonia	1	
Acute Poliomyelitis	1	
		28
		70

CANCER.

10 deaths, 6 Males and 4 Females, occurred in 1949, compared with 14 deaths, 7 Males and 7 Females in 1948.

Death Rate from Cancer per 1,000 estimated population:

Mean of 5 years, 1944—1948	1.51
Year 1948	1.76
Year 1949	1.25
Decrease in 1949 on 5 years' average	—0.26
Decrease in 1949 on 1948	—0.51

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

No local action has been taken under Section 176 of the Public Health Act, 1936, for the prevention of blindness, or for the treatment of persons suffering from any disease or injury to the eyes.

The administration of the Blind Persons Act, 1920 is undertaken in this area by the staff of the County Medical Officer of Health.

TUBERCULOSIS.

The notifications received during the year under the Public Health (T.B) Regulations, 1930 were as follows:—

New Cases and Mortality during 1949:

	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
Age Periods	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
10	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
35	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—
65-over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not known	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
	2	3	1	3	1	1	—	—

Notification of the Disease is prompt and satisfactory. The County Council provides facilities for the treatment of Tuberculosis, and these services are fully used and appreciated. The Tuberculosis Dispensary for the Wigan Rural District has recently been removed from Mesnes Park Terrace, Wigan to Millgate, Wigan, and patients may be referred there for examination by their own doctor, or by the Assistant County Medical Officer.

Death Rate from Tuberculosis of the Respiratory System was :

Mean of 5 years, 1944—1948	0.21
Year 1948	0.12
Year 1949	0.25
Increase in 1949 on 5 years' average	0.04
Increase in 1949 on 1948	0.13

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948—Section 47 :

No cases were dealt with during the year under Sub-Section 3 of this Act.

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 and 1948.

Part I of the Act.

1.—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by the Sanitary Inspectors) :—

Premises (1)	M/c. line No. (2)	No. on Register (3)	No. of Inspections (4)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	1	20	18
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	2	10	6
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority *(excluding out-workers' premises)	3	2	—
Total		32	24

*Electrical Stations (Section 103 (1)), Institutions. (Section 104) and sites of Building Operations and Works of Engineering Construction (Sections 107 and 108).

2.—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND :—

Three cases of want of cleanliness were found and remedied.

One case of insufficient and one defective sanitary convenience (S.7) were found and remedied.

Part VIII of the Act.

OUTWORK.

(Sections 110 and 111).

The number of out-workers in the August list required by Sect. 110 (1) (c) was 3 Basket-makers.

G. H. POTTER,

Medical Officer of Health.

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